

INTERNALIZING NATIONALISM AWARENESS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD ISLAMIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WITH THE SPIRIT OF ASWAJA AN-NAHDLIYAH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at describing and analyzing the internalization of national awareness through raudlatul athfal (RA; an Islamic early childhood education institution) with the spirit of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah. Aswaja an-Nahdliyah is an ideology adopted by Nahdlatul Ulama, a major Islamic religious organization in Indonesia. This study argues that the internalization of the national awareness needs to be instilled from early age to anticipate the influence of globalization which is feared to erode the original character of a nation. Within the study, the qualitative method was adopted in order to answer two research questions: (1) how Islamic early childhood educational institutions develop nationalism awareness through the teachings of Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah; and (2) how the institutions construct the awareness of nationalism through the teachings of Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah. The results of the study show that the internalization of nationalism awareness through Islamic early childhood education institutions with the Aswaja an-Nahdliyah's spirit has been carried out through curriculum content which has been systematically arranged in each research subject with the principle of considering early childhood characteristics. At the same time, the results of the study also show that the construction of nationalism awareness in the Islamic early childhood education institutions can be seen in Islamic holidays and national activities which were held on the Islamic early childhood institutions.

Keywords: Internalization, nationalism awareness, raudlatul athfal, Aswaja an-Nahdliyah's spirit

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has eliminated boundaries among nations and cultures. As a result, globalization might have negative impacts in relation to unpreparedness to deal with it; the unpreparedness itself might include nationalism values due to the openness of information media especially among early childhood children. Ideally, the values of nationalism should be internalized since early childhood to grow and develop patriotism toward state and nation (Nurhaidah 2015). Fortunately, some countries still uphold their national cultural values despite having high technological advances. For example, Japan as a developed country has never left

its traditional culture as a form of love for the country. The education system policy during the Meiji Restoration era in 1907 which had been adopted from American, French, and German technologies made Japan come into modern era but still retained its agricultural characteristics (Reischauer 1978: 217; Phillips 2014). In Asian countries such as China, South Korea, North Korea, one of the ways to instill love for the country is the conscription program for 18 years old teenagers (*China's National Defense in the New Era* 2019; *Military Service in Korea* 2020; Minnich 2005). The conscription program contains about growing the love for the country and how to defend the country from undermining foreign military.

Indonesia does not have conscription program to raise nationalism awareness like in China, South Korea, and North Korea. The internalization of nationalism or the sense of loving the homeland in the country of Indonesia is planted from early age, starting from kindergarten to college by giving Pancasila and Civic Education subjects. However, several phenomena which take place in Indonesia, as having been reported by news in numerous mass media, imply the presence of a multidimensional crisis. The Religious Research, Development and Training Agency mentions that the crisis in Indonesia has been related to serious threat toward the national integrity such as the setback in the implementation of noble and courteous ethics within social dynamics and the weakening of honesty and trustworthiness in the national life (MORA, Religion Research Development and Training Agency 2009:87–88).

Another phenomenon which has been found in relation to the globalization is the circulation of textbooks on practical teaching methods in early childhood institutions using inappropriate words for the two to five years old children. These textbooks are considered to display the alternatives of learning materials that contain radicalism such as: (1) “sabotage”; (2) “great passion for Saudi” (*gelora hati ke Saudi*); (3) “bomb” (*bom*); and (3) “martyr on jihad field (*sahid di medan jihad*)”. At the same time, there are also several phrases and even sentences which have been inappropriate for the early childhood since these phrases and sentences contain radicalism, namely: (1) “willing to die for defending our religion (*rela mati bela agama*)”; (2) “where the bomb squad is (*gegana ada di mana*)”; (3) “we shall not forgive when our religion is humiliated (*bila agama kita dihina kita tiada rela*)”; (4) “bazooka is taken away (*basoka dibawa lari*)”; (5) “slaughter Moslem clerics (*bantai kyai*)”; and (6) “why should we suffer from religion-phobia (*mengapa fobia pada agama*)” (Budi, 2018). In addition to the previously mentioned phenomena, many pictures and videos displaying kindergarten students who march, wear *pardah*, and bring a replica of M-16 made of cardboard in a carnival

for commemorating the 73rd Independence Day Celebration of the Republic of Indonesia have circulated online (BBC Indonesia 2018).

The carnival should have followed the treasures of Indonesian culture, but on that occasion the children wore a *pardah* and brought a replica of the M-16. These two things are closely related to radical groups. Assessing these situations, two questions should be proposed as a part of the contemplation toward the phenomena: (1) whether the above phenomena are the description on the internalization of the nationalism values among the early childhood in the early childhood educational institutions or kindergartens; and (2) whether the above phenomena are just the tip of an iceberg from all early childhood educational institutions and kindergartens with regards to the teaching and the internalization of the nationalism values among early childhood children.

Indeed, departing from the elaboration in the two previous paragraphs, it is interesting and even important to study the patterns of growing and developing nationalism awareness among early childhood children throughout early childhood educational institutions (kindergartens) in Indonesia since these institutions consist of various types. However, in general the early childhood educational institutions and the kindergartens can be classified into two types namely: (1) the early childhood educational institutions and the kindergartens under the scope of the Ministry of Religious Affairs; and (2) the early childhood educational institutions and the kindergartens under the scope of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The early childhood educational institutions and kindergartens which belong to the scope of the Ministry of Religious Affairs namely *Raudlatul Athfal* (hereafter called RA) are mostly organized by Nahdlatul Ulama with the spirit of *Aswaja an-Nahdliah*.

Studying national consciousness development in RA with *Aswaja* spirit (ideology) is interesting because it will describe how the largest religious organization in Indonesia Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)

fosters the love of the country from childhood. Hopefully in the future the results of education about the love of this country will make the country stronger.

Then, looking at the background of the study, it is interesting to analyze the process of internalizing nationalism in RA with the teachings of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* because these teachings strive to internalize a strong sense of religiosity in establishing balance (*tawassuth*). Then, two problems will be formulated in the study namely: (1) how the selected RA grow and develop nationalism awareness through the teachings of *Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah* in the City of Semarang, Indonesia; and (2) how the selected RA construct the awareness of nationalism through the teachings of *Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah* in the City of Semarang Indonesia. Based on the two aforementioned research questions, the objectives of the study are (1) to describe and analyze the process of growing and developing the awareness of nationalism through the teachings of *Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah* in *raudlatul athfal* in the City of Semarang Indonesia; and (2) to identify the construction of nationalism awareness development among RA through the teachings of *Aswaja*.

This study argues that developing national awareness needs to be instilled from early age in order to deal with negative globalization influence. This study also proves that RA as Islamic early childhood education institution has to develop national awareness through education process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before discussing further about nationalism awareness among the students of RA, it is better to know figure out several studies about theme. There are several studies which were conducted with regards to the internalization of nationalism values in educational institutions. For example, Rifa'i, et.al found that the concept of *Aswaja* has been taught in Islamic education institutions to shape characters of nationalism among the

students. The characters of nationalism have been formed among them like having high sense of faithfulness (religiosity), having tolerance, maintaining integrity and unity, showing discipline, maintaining order, showing courage and honesty, appreciating the service of national heroes, being democratic, showing responsibility, and loving local cultures (Rifa'i, Wisika, and Alimi 2017).

A.M. Wibowo in his research on *rohis* (an organization for muslim students in senior high schools) found that religious values internalize among *rohis* members through the roles of the communicators, namely the teachers of Islamic education subject, the other teachers (non-Islamic education subject teacher), and religion figures, who participate in the learning process both inside and outside the school. In addition, the materials, the students, the method, and the media used are very important in delivering the message and in internalizing different level of the understanding. As a result, the method and the the message delivered to the students should be adjusted to the their psychological conditions. (Wibowo 2017). Furthermore, in her article, Wuryandani (2017) shows that nationalism values are internalized by means of storytelling, study tour, singing, and habituation. In conducting these activities, the approaches used are role modeland value clarification (Wuryandani 2017).

Another study discussing about nationalism is Jones's dissertation. In his dissertation Jones stated that cultural identities should be acknowledged and reinforced from early childhood until the children are able to practice the culture well and eventually become the mature or even parents. The ways of acknowledging and reinforcing the cultural identities are performing a sequence of activities, holding good training programs, performing and demonstrating the culture identity by using numerous facilities, and showing commitment to solve any problem (Jones 2009).

Fauzia (2015) is other scholar discussing about education in early childhood. She found

that the students are able to absorb appropriate learning method. Early childhood also tends to be responsive when the teacher teaches according to the age of the students. In addition, the learning models for the early childhood are easily absorbed when the teachers perform certain creation. Through appropriate method, nationalism values can be well-absorbed by the early childhood (Istiyani 2013).

Next, another study in early childhood education is a study conducted by Siti Fauzia. She found that the role of the teachers in shaping Islamic religious behaviors among the children is very important. These behaviors include understanding toward Islamic teachings, the love toward the creatures, and students' skills in performing their worship.

From the aforementioned literatures, it can be seen that the previous studies emphasized on growing and developing nationalism awareness among early childhood with reference to the curriculum of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. Therefore, this study proves that the inculcation of nationalistic values has been instilled in *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah raudlatul athfal* in Semarang City, Central Java Province.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Concept of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* and Nationalism

Aswaja movement is a movement which can be implemented as a doctrine formulated from a theological aspect by Al-Asy'ari in Basrah, Al-Maturidi in Samarkand and At-Thahawi in Egypt (Zainuddin 2015; Baehaqi 2010). There are many Islamic movement groups which claim to be the *aswaja* movement. One of them is Nahdlatul Ulama with *aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. Ideology. The thought of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* is the religious understandings delivered by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). This religious understanding is directly extracted from Islamic teachings sources namely the *Koran*, *as-Sunnah*, *al-Ijma*, and *al-Qiyas*. *Aswaja* itself refers to the foundation of reasoning, behaving, and acting for all members of Nahdlatul

Ulama which has been reflected in the behaviors of both the members and the organization. The spirit of *Aswaja* holds four characters namely: (1) *at-tawassuth* (moderation); (2) *at-tawazun* (equilibrium); (3) *i'tidal* (integrity); and (4) *at-tasamuh* (tolerance) (Muzadi 2005: 18). It is the stipulation of the four characters which discerns Nahdlatul Ulama from Shia, which denies *qiyas*, and the ideology of Mu'tazliha, which denies *ijma*.

According to K.H. Bisri Mustofa, the definition of *Aswaja* in the context of Nahdlatul Ulama, as it is quoted by Nur Hidayah (2015), basically refers to *manhaj fikrah nahdhiyah* (the reasoning method of Nahdlatul Ulama) that has been used by the Nahdlatul Ulama in responding to both religious problems and societal problems with the following characteristics: (1) *tawassuth* (moderation); (2) *tasamuh* (tolerance); (3) *islahiyyah* (improvement); (4) *tathawwuniyah* (dynamism); and (5) *manhajiyah* (methodology). In addition, according to Said Aqil Siraj, *Aswaja* is a religious reasoning method which covers all aspects of life and stands on the principles of balance, moderation, and neutrality in faith, intermediary, and adhesive within social life and also within justice and tolerance in politics. Looking at the definition, *Aswaja* can be defined as the adhesive among groups and classes and tolerance with non-*Aswaja* groups and classes and even with non-Moslem people. In other words, *Aswaja* is a concept which looks for middle way between *nash* and intelligence or between *ra'yi* and *naqal*.

In addition, Hasyim (2002: 67) argues that in the context of Indonesia the spirit of *ahlussunah wal jamaah* has been born based on three fundamentally historical values. First, *ahlusunnah wal jamaah* has served as the form of resistance toward the Dutch colonialization since the Dutch strove to breakdown the potentials of Islam. The Dutch colonialization itself brought to the sense of responsibility among religion figures in protecting the purity and the nobility of the Islamic teachings. Second, *ahlussunah wal jamaah* has served as the sense of responsibility

among religious figures as the leaders in fighting for independence and freedom from the Dutch colonialization. Third, *ahlusunnah wal jamaah* has become the part of responsibility among the pious scholars in maintaining peace and serenity of Indonesia. In relation to Hasyim's argument, *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* in the context of nationalism is based on four spirits namely: (1) *ruhut tadayyun* (the spirit of religion which is understood, deepened, and practiced); (2) *ruhul wathaniyyah* (the spirit of nationalism); (3) *ruhut ta'addudiyah* (the spirit of mutual respect); and (4) *ruhul insaniyyah* (the spirit of humanity) (PWNU 2007: 47-48).

Nationalism is a sense of affection toward the nation and the homeland which has been triggered by the shared traditions in relation to history, religion, language, culture, government, residence, and desire to maintain and develop these shared traditions as the shared belongings of the single nation. The principles of nationalism can be considered as the desire to achieve unity, the desire to attain freedom, the desire to achieve genuineness, and the desire to attain respect (PWNU 2007). In other words, nationalism refers to the thoughts that prioritize the improvement and the well-being of the state or the nation. In relation to the statement, the term "nation" can be considered as the desire to stay together or the willingness to establish a communal life (Suhartono 1994). The appropriate context of nationalism in Indonesia is the theory of wills. The spirit of nationalism which has been the psychological state of mind should always be raised and lived. The sense of nationalism should always be nurtured all the time. At the same time, nationalism can be considered as the collective conscience for dealing with the poor socio-political conditions (Suhartono 1994). In the context of a nation, nationalism can be considered as the fundamental concept of rational justification from the demand toward the determination of own fate, which can bound by the participation of all people on the behave of the nation by all means for the sake of the nation (Rosyada 2013; Heywood 2015).

The spirit of nationalism can be grown and developed through the values of Pancasila. the values of nationalism in Pancasila are the main foundation of character establishment in the nation. The reason is that Pancasila has been one of the agreement which frames the plurality of a nation (Ubaedillah 2016). Altogether with the statement, every component in the values of Pancasila contains Islamic religious values, which have been the part of *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (believe in one God), the first principle of Pancasila. Concerning to the statement, the materials of Islamic education in educational institutions are loaded with the content of universal values, which have been the part of nationalism values. Nurhayati Djamas in Arraiyah (2016: 13) states that the government has stipulated 18 main characters as the benchmark in the implementation of national character education. These 18 characters are: religious; responsible; honest, tolerant; disciplines; hardworking; creative; independent; democratic; curious; nationalist; achievement-appreciating; friendly; communicative; peace loving; loving reading; caring; social; and environment-caring. Pancasila is not in contradiction with the spirit of Aswaja because Pancasila is the objectification of Islam and the principles of Pancasila are not in contradiction with the teachings of Islam (Bahri, 2018; Kuntowijoyo 1997; Ridwan 2017; Setiawan 2019; Syihab 2012).

The Growth and Development of Early Childhood

According to Hurlock, early childhood refers to the pre-school age or the "intermediary" age namely from 2 until 6 years old (Hurlock 1972; Santrock 2011; Hapsari 2016:179). In Indonesia, the definition of early childhood has been formulated in Article 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Education, the Republic of Indonesia. According to the Article, it is explained that early childhood education refers to the efforts directed toward the children from their birth until the age of 6 (six) years old through the

provision of educational stimulation in order to support the growth and the development of the physics and the mentality so that the children will be ready for coming into the subsequent educational stage (MOEC 2012).

The term “child growth and development” is intertwined; the only difference is that the term “growth” is limited to the structural and physiological changes from infant into adult within an individual and the characteristics of growth are usually qualitative. On the contrary, the term “development” can be used to refer to both the physical and the non-physical changes such as mental changes or mental function changes. Consequently, growth is also part of development. Specific to the term of development, development can be quantitative and also qualitative. As a result, there are changes which can be measured and calculated by units and there are also changes that can only be measured by using description (Hapsari 2016: 16). There are many factors which influence the growth and the development of the children such as the influence of: (1) parents; (2) siblings; (3) neighborhood; and (4) school. At the same time, culture is also able to influence the growth and the development of the children (Morrison 2016: 438)

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was a qualitative research focusing on the aspects that had taken place in the life of a certain group (Zamroni 2013:73). Systematically, the object of a qualitative study can be categorized into who would perform and what would be performed in RA located in the City of Semarang Indonesia. The objects of this research were five RA with the spirit of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* in the city of Semarang, Indonesia. The five *raudlatul athfal* are RA Al Hikmah Polaman, RA An-Nafi Wonolopo, RA Muslimat 56 in Mijen sub-district, RA Al Hidayah Ngaliyan, and RA Masjid Al-Azhar Ngaliyan. The reason of taking these five RAs was due to the fact that Semarang is one of the five big cities in Indonesia and there are many RA with the spirit of *Aswaja* (ideology) Semarang. The

RAs taken from several sub-districts represent geographical location of the highlands and lowlands.

The data collection in this study consisted of four stages (Creswell 2010: 270). The first stage was qualitative observation in which the researchers went directly to the research field in order to observe the behaviours and the activities of the students and the teachers in the RA during schooltime. The observation was also conducted to search activities of nationalism and teaching *aswaja* materials. The second stage was in-depth interview which involved five principals of RA and vice principals on curriculum or teachers of RA. In the second stage, a focus group discussions was held in order to gather the data from the field and crosscheck the data in the field. The third stage was the qualitative document review. The qualitative documents which had been reviewed in the study were the public and the private documents such as the curriculum of RA (which referred to the association of RA teachers) the profile of the modified curriculum from each RA and the daily lesson plans such as the theme “My Nation” with the sub-theme “My Country” and “the Country Symbol”, and the learning progress book of the early childhood. The fourth stage was the analysis toward the audio-visual materials such as pictures, videos of learning activities the early childhood performed in the RA, art objects, and voice notes through gadgets with the teachers and the principals of the early childhood education institutions in the City of Semarang.

The validity of a qualitative study should be conducted in order that the results of the qualitative study shall be considered valid and meeting the intersubjective claim and the empirical truth claim (Neuman 2013: 242-243). In terms of inter-subjectiveness, the data validity should be reasonable and should be comprehensible for many people. Empirically, the data should be proven and supported by various empirical data in relation to the theory and the facts in the education domain of RA and also to the actual events inside the environment of RA. According to Neuman (2013: 571) the data

analysis was conducted in four stages.

In the first stage, the collected data were classified into some categories by concerning on the activities of nationalism, the learning activities that implemented the teachings of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah's* spirit, and the activities of growth and development among the RA students. The second stage is the open coding into the relevant category. The data collected from interview and documentation were assigned with the preliminary code for the sake of the data classification. Next, in the third stage, the axial coding was performed by defining code label for each theme and establishing the inter-theme connection or deepening the concept represented by the theme. The authors selectively searched the cases which illustrated the theme and made comparison after the data collection process had been partially or completely finished. Departing from the results of the data collection in the field, it was found that every RA displayed different and unique findings. Eventually, in the fourth stage the coding was translated or interpreted. The findings which were collected, classified, defined, labeled and presented were then examined so that the bias of analysis was minimized and eliminated throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Internalization of Nationalism Awareness through the RA Institutions

This study has succeeded in revealing activities fostering national awareness in early childhood students. Some activities carried out in the RA to develop students' national awareness were modest ceremonies, singing heroic songs, reading Pancasila both independently and in groups, and introducing national songs relevant to the theme of the lesson, such as "Indonesia Raya" "Hari Merdeka", "Satu Nusa Satu Bangsa" and "Halo-Halo Bandung". The growth and development of children's awareness about the nation and loving the homeland was also carried out on the anniversary of

independence, August 17, such as holding competitions, festivals (carnivals) of children around the village and so on.

The introduction of the growth and development toward nationalism awareness among the early children through the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* teaching is performed by using cultural terms on the theme "Nation" and by inviting them to respect Indonesian various cultures in the form of mutual tolerance. The principles for internalizing nationalism awareness are implemented based on the principles of humanity and tolerance. In this regard, the activities which the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*-based RA institutions perform are, for example, fund raising for natural disaster victims, a routine donation (*infaq*) every Friday, and asking for forgiveness after making dispute. In other occasions, the students of the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*-based are invited to visit orphanages in order to teach them to share with others by giving donation to others.

The internalization of national values is also carried out by reading the pledge for the homeland which is read every day before coming into the class. This activity is carried out in a marching the students and sing the songs of "Satu Nusa Satu Bangsa" and "Yalal wathon" after their teachers. The "Satu Nusa Satu Bangsa" is the pledge of love for the country while the song "Yalal wathon" contains the obligation of Moslems to love their country. Learning starts from 07.15 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and begins with prayer, reading *Asmaul Husna*, introduction to selected verses of the Koran, daily prayers and *Hadith*. In addition, the RA students are also introduced to the Hijaiyah letters using both Iqro and Yambua methods and playing in learning centers in each RA. The internalization of nationalism awareness is also introduced through the explanation of all religious Holy days of the six official religions in Indonesia. The introduction is intended to develop the sense of tolerance and diversity toward Indonesia which consists of various religions. At the same time, the national symbols are also introduced to the students of the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*-based RA institutions. In fact, the symbol of the state,

namely the Red and White Flag, becomes the part of the drill materials in order to ensure that the early childhood has recognized the national flag well. One of the ways for ensuring this matter is laying out the national flags from several countries and asking them to pinpoint the Indonesian flag. Furthermore, the effort of growing and developing the nationalism awareness among the students is also pursued by introducing traditional costumes, colouring traditional costumers, and introducing the students to Indonesian traditional cuisines.

In more specific, the introduction toward the principles of nationalism in the RA Al-Hikmah is pursued in the second semester. In this semester, the early childhood students are introduced to Garuda, Pancasila, and the principles of Pancasila. These principles are introduced in every single day and on every Monday the ceremony is held to fortify the sense of nationalism among the early childhood students. Although the students of RA Al-Hikmah Polaman Mijen are not in order whenever they march, at least they are already accustomed to the ceremony. In this RA, the growth and development of nationalism awareness are routinely and systematically performed by using the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. The contents of nationalism are inserted into the development programs which are designed for the second semester, and the first and second semester outbreaks. The nationalism values are also inserted in the beginning and the end of Ramadhan, the Eid Mubarak Holiday, the Independence Day celebration, the Eid Al-Adha Holiday, Islamic New Year Holiday, the Maulid Nabi (commemoration of the Prophet's Birthday), the Chinese New Year, the Nyepi Holyday, Isra Miraj, the International Labour Day, the Ascension Day, the Vesakh Day, and the Birth of Pancasila commemoration.

Especially at RA al-Hidayah, daily activities learning is always preceded by reading a pledge of nationalism. The contents of the pledge are as follow:

"We, the students of RA Al-Hidayah, promise that we believe in and obey Allah and His Prophet. We, the students of RA Al-Hidayah, promise that

we shall devote ourselves to our fathers and our mothers and we shall also obey the directions of our teachers. We, the students of RA Al-Hidayah, promise that we shall practice Pancasila and obey 1945 Constitution. We, the students of Raudlatul Athfal Al-Hidayah, promise that we shall always uphold our country, our nation, and our religion. We, the students of RA Al-Hidayah, promise that we shall always maintain the reputation of our school."

After the students finish reading aloud their pledge of nationalism, the students memorize Pancasila loudly. The memorization is selected because the students are not able to read yet. Then, the memorization by the RA institutions is performed in the following sequence: (1) the teachers read aloud the Pancasila first; and (2) the students immediately follow the teachers' lines. In the long run, the students will be able to memorize the Pancasila. In order to fortify their memory on Pancasila, the text of Pancasila is written in colors on the front wall of the RA buildings.

In the RA Muslimat 56, the teachers introduce the Pancasila through the symbols of each principle. The concept of Pancasila itself is introduced in every morning during the activities of marching practice. Beginning with the greetings, the students of RA Muslimat 56 are trained to march in order, are encouraged to read their pledge of nationalism, are encouraged to read two *shahada* sentences, are encouraged to recite the *asmaul husna*, and eventually are introduced to the concept of Pancasila from each symbol of the principles. These activities are routinely performed every day so that the students will be able to memorize the concept of Pancasila immediately. In addition, the national flag Red and White is also introduced to the students through dialogue. Within the dialogue, the teachers ask, "What is the color of the Indonesian national flag?" and the students will simply answer, "Red and White." Then, the teacher further asks, "What is the meaning of Red and what is the meaning of White?" Afterward, the students will reply, "Red means brave while White means pure." At the end of the dialogue,

the teacher will ask, "What is the meaning of Red and White?" The students will answer, "We are brave because we are right." In addition to these activities and also to the dialogue, the national songs such as *Garuda Pancasila* and *Halo-Halo Bandung* are also introduced. On this occasion, the teachers also introduce traditional songs by singing them together. The traditional songs introduced to the students are *Mentok Tak Kandani*, *Aku Duwe Pitik Cilik*, *Aku Duwe Dolanan Sing Apik*, and so forth.

The Construction of Developing Nationalism Awareness among the RA within the Spirit of Aswaja An-Nahdliyah

The activities which lead to the growth and the development of the nationalism awareness among the the RA students are the formal ones in the nationalism-related themes and sub-themes. The intended themes are namely *My Country*, *President*, and *Symbol of the State*.

The learning activities are apparent at the preliminary learning or the preparation for the class. The preliminary activities are like marching along the way before entering the classroom, reading the pledge of nationalism, reading aloud *Pancasila* and singing several national songs. Besides these activities, nationalism awareness is also performed outside the formal learning process such as commemorating the Independence Day by joining several games, joining ceremony on every Monday, and joining the ceremonies for on national holidays.

The means to raise nationalism awareness among early childhood in RA with the spirit of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* are carried out in a planned system in the RA curriculum. In terms of curriculum content, several *Raudlatul Athfal* institutions have clearly and strictly displayed the contents which lead to educating nationalism awareness through the principles of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*. The contents are found in the RA An-Naafi, the RA Al-Hidayah, and the RA Muslimat, These RA institutions clearly depict the principles

of nationalism and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* in their formal and informal learning process. For example, the nationalism and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* contents of their formal learning process can be traced into the themes and the sub-themes of nationalism namely: (1) My Nation; (2) The Symbol of the State; and (3) My Country.

At the same time, these contents can also be traced in the learning centers of these RA institutions. Indeed, the contents of nationalism and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* have been integrated into the learning themes. Then, the contents of nationalism that have been integrated are the national songs (*Garuda Pancasila*, *Hari Kemerdekaan*, *Satu Nusa Satu Bangsa*, and alike), the folk songs (*Menthok*, *Lir Ilir*, *Pitik Cilik*, and alike), the text of *Pancasila*, the 1945 Constitution, and the concept of traditional games (*dakon*, *engklek*, and *lumbungan*). On the contrary, the integrated *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* contents are *suroh Yasin*, text and pronunciation of *Tahlil*, *Qunut Prayer*, *shalawat badar*, *Shalawat Nariyah*, *Asmaul Husna*, the march of NU *Yalal Wathan*, *suroh Al-Fatihah*, and *ayat kursi*.

The Means for Developing the Awareness of Nationalism among the Early Childhood using the Principles of Aswaja An-Nahdliyah

TheselectedIslamicearlychildhood education institutions as the subjects of the study possess various characteristics. These characteristics are apparent from the local content of each RA which is performed by means of modification.

Despite the differences in terms of vision and mission from one RA institution to another, the five selected RA institutions share a single similarity, namely all of these institutions use a combined curriculum which is modified from the curriculum of General Directorate of Early Childhood, Basic Education, and Secondary Education The Ministry of Education and Culture, and the curriculum of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. The curriculum developed base on result finding can be analyzed that those RA build curriculum pays

attention to nine types of learning intelligence of the children with integration toward the values of Islamic faith. The nine learning intelligences are: (1) linguistic intelligence; (2) logical-mathematical intelligence; (3) visual-spatial intelligence; (4) musical intelligence; (5) kinesthetical intelligence; (6) interpersonal intelligence; (7) intrapersonal intelligence; (8) naturalistic intelligence; and (9) spiritual intelligence (MOEC 2014). On the contrary, the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* curriculum refers to the curriculum developed by the RA with emphasis on the following four principles: (1) *ruhut tadayyun* (the spirit of religion that is understood, deepened, and practiced); (2) *ruhul wathaniyyah* (the spirit of nationalism); (3) *ruhut ta'addudiyah* (the spirit of mutual respect); and (4) *ruhul insaniyyah* (the spirit of humanity) (PWNU 2007). All of these principles are implemented in their daily practices.

The spirit of nationalism in *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* that has been based on the four previously mentioned principles are displayed by encouraging the Nahdliyin people to always improve their understanding toward the religious values. For Nahdlatul Ulama, Islam is a friendly and peaceful religion. With the values of Indonesianism which have been contained in Islam, Nahdlatul Ulama becomes the barometer of the moderate religious practice (*tawassuth*) (Muchtar 2007: 47-48). Under the principles of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, Indonesianism and Islamism are integrated instead of separated. Pancasila is accepted under the concept of *i'tiqodi* (faithfulness) and *syar'i* as the basis of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The Preamble of the 1945 Constitution has been the *mitsaqon gholidhon* (a solid agreement) of the founding fathers and has become the basis of the nation's establishment as the manifestation of the Indonesian purpose. The Preamble itself has contained the objective of the nation's establishment and also the ideological foundation of the nation namely Pancasila (Asy'ari 2018: 1-2)

The differences among the five research subjects are found in the vision and the mission

of each RA (*Raudlatul Athfal*) institution since the vision and the mission have been adjusted to the objectives and the characteristics of each RA. Besides, another difference is found in the curriculum development within each other institution. One *raudlatul athfal* institution has developed the Beyond Center and Circle Time (BCCT) Learning Curriculum in combination with the integrated thematic learning strategy with Islamic values. On another occasion, another *raudlatul athfal* institution has developed some kinds of flowing curriculum following the educational centers under possession.

The activities which are performed by the RA institutions, as having been described above, are expected to be the part of the early childhood students' habit in the future especially when they are already adult. According to Benjamin S. Bloom (1965), such a learning model makes the learning process meaningful (knowledge) and affective (habit formation) and leads to the habituation (psychomotor). The description about how the RA institutions perform the activities of growing and developing the nationalism awareness among the early childhood students is probably not different than the RA base on *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* spirit institutions in the local, regional, and even national level in the Province of Central Java. The reason is that the curriculum contents themselves, the national ones, the regional ones, and even the local ones, still refer to the existing values.

In terms of the content which leads to the theme of nationalism, the *raudlatul athfal* as Islamic early childhood education with spirit of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* mostly refers to great concept namely the curriculum. In order to internalize nationalism awareness of their students, the five RA institutions in this study had developed their curricula well and designed them systematically when other institutions had not designed them yet. Therefore, the systematic design of internalization toward the awareness of nationalism is apparent from their curriculum. The RA institutions which have systematically designed the insight of nationalism will facilitate

the theme of nationalism through the activities which have been based on the principles of the teachings of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. For example, the curriculum contents in the RA Al-Hidayah collaborate with activities which lead to the internalization of nationalism awareness among early childhood through relevant lesson themes and sub-themes. The relevant themes and sub-themes have been designed in the formal curriculum in the form of the daily lesson plans and even hidden curriculum with the local contents. On the contrary, the content of nationalism is provided in the appropriate moments such as the celebration of The Independence Day and other national holidays.

The freedom and the creativity in the curriculum design which hold the nuance of nationalism under the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* are apparent in the curriculum profile from each RA institution. This finding is manifest in all of the selected RA institutions. The management of the selected *raudlatul athfal* institutions masters the concept of nationalism under the principles of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, which generally are uploaded unto the RA's activities. In addition, the layout of the curriculum contents has also been representative for the RA institutions because these contents have already accommodated the values of nationalism.

In the academic calendar of *Raudlotul Athfal* Al-Hidayah, there is not any differentiation between festive days and national holidays. Whenever there is a day off, the learning activities will be put down because the RA should adjust itself to the government regulations in general. With regards to the statement, three out of the five *raudlotul athfal* institutions in the study have a clear concept of curriculum which contains the principles of nationalism and the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. The evidence is that the activity plan in the academic calendar has been designed for the whole year. At the same time, the arrangement of the formal curriculum and the local curriculum is not set apart from the courage and the creativity of the institution management is undergoing changes. The courage

of the management in modifying the curriculum is supported by the foundation. For instance, the curriculum thickness which has been based on the nationalism awareness and the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* in the *Raudlatul Athfal* An-Nafi and the *Raudlatul Athfal* Al-Hikmah is possible to attain because of the full support from the management. In fact, the management of the two Raudlatul Institutions provides full companion to the caretakers.

On the other hand, unfortunately, within the study it is also found that the curriculum contents of some RA institutions, which have been affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama, have not depicted the conceptually representative teachings of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. For example, the Raudlatul Athfal Muslimat 56 has not designed the curriculum in the form of a systematic program or sequence activity for the whole year (two semesters). The reason is that the curriculum which has been the reference of the Raudlatul Athfal Muslimat 56 is the one which has been developed by the Ministry of Education and Cultures. Although there has been an instruction from the ministry that the curriculum development of the RA institutions can be adjusted to their peculiarity, in the practice the RA Muslimat 56 has not developed or even depicted its peculiarity.

In other instances, several RA institutions have not been affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama but have been organized by the people of Nahdliyin¹. This case is apparent from the RA Masjid Al-Azhar. Most of the caretakers in the Al-Azhar Mosque are parts of the Nahdliyin people. Despite the peculiar characteristics, the curriculum contents in the RA Masjid Al-Azhar are very general and, in fact, have not shown the peculiar characteristics of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*. However, in terms of nationalism, the curriculum contents of the RA Masjid Al-Azhar have depicted the sense of nationalism.

The content of nationalism in all RA institutions which have been affiliated with the

¹ The people of Nahdliyin, or *masyarakat Nahdliyin* in Indonesia are the name given to the followers or the members of Nahdlatul Ulama organization.

Nahdlatul Ulama organization, in general, is already included in the curriculum. However, some Raudlatul *Athfal* institutions in this study have shown their creative aspects in terms of content. For example, the RA An-Naafi has designed a pocketbook for teaching reading and writing to the students. The pocketbook is named "Alfi" and contains pronunciation and reading activities. In a closer examination, the pocketbook also contains *tahlil* verses, folk songs, and national songs. In other words, the RA An-Naafi has indirectly introduced and taught how to read and write properly and, at the same time, delivered the message of nationalism, regionalism, and Islamism as the students learn to read and write.

The RA institutions have shown their courage and creativity in developing the curriculum and translating the curriculum in relevant learning materials. With regards to the curriculum development, these RA institutions are divided into mainstream curriculum development, semi-mainstream curriculum development, and anti-mainstream curriculum development. The learning contents of the RA institutions which adopt the mainstream curriculum development are in accordance with the generally demanded materials in the environment of IGRA² or with the curriculum which has been developed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. One of such *raudlatul athfal* institutions is the RA Masjid Al-Azhar. On the other hand, the RA institutions which can be categorized as semi-mainstream curriculum development are the ones in which learning preparedness is less maximum (less well-designed) but which learning practice is quite maximum. An example of such RA institutions is the RA 56. Last but not the least, the RA institutions which can be categorized as part of anti-mainstream curriculum development are the ones which have undergone many changes within the curriculum development especially by inputting local cultures and the *Aswaja an-*

Nahdliyah values in the local contents. The examples of such RA institutions are namely: RA An-Naafi and RA Al-Hikmah, and RA Al-Hidayah. Consequently, the nuance of local cultures, Indonesian cultures, and *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* values has been very thick. Actually, this situation has also been apparent in the semi-mainstream RA institutions but the management of these local contents have not been maximum as having been indicated by the absence of the Daily Lesson Plan and the representative media.

From the results of observation, documentation study, and in-depth interviews, it is found that the RA institutions have performed several activities to grow and develop the nationalism awareness. These activities are specifically designed by RA An-Naafi, RA Al-Hikmah, and RA Al-Hidayah. These RA institutions always hold ceremony on every Monday and commemorate national holidays. On the contrary, other RA institutions, such as the RA Muslimat 56 and the RA Al-Azhar have performed similar activities but on the minimum level. The development of the activities which leads early childhood children to the nationalism awareness depends on the creativity of the RA institutions in the learning process management. The creative RA institutions will always perform various learning processes and benefit the moments of nationalism such as the commemoration of Kartini Day, National Education Day, and others. Moreover, the RA institutions with a high sense of nationalism will always hold numerous activities in every moment of nationalism. This initiative has been found in RA Al-Hikmah and RA An-Naafi. Both of the RA institutions always hold on several activities in the commemoration of every national day. In the principles of the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* teachings, the awareness of nationalism has originally been the part of the teachings themselves. Indeed, the awareness of nationalism has been the part of *ukhuwwah wathaniyyah*. The awareness of nationalism in the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* has already become a prevalence for Indonesian people. The reason is that the Indonesian people

² IGRA stands for *Ikatan Guru Raudlatul Athfal* or the Association of Raudlatul Athfal Teachers.

should be aware of their nationalism since they live in the Archipelago.

The activities of internalizing nationalism awareness in the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* contain and display three types of *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), namely *ukhuwwah basyariyyah* (brotherhood among human), *ukhuwwah Islamiyyah* (brotherhood among Muslims), and *ukhuwwah wathaniyyah* (national brotherhood). The activities which contain the values of *ukhuwwah basyariyyah* refer to the ones which contain general humanistic values such as visiting orphanage, visiting friend who is sick, and giving a donation to the victims of disaster. Then, the activities which contain the values of *ukhuwwah Islamiyyah* refer to the ones which contain general Islamic values such as learning reciting short *surahs* of the Koran and prayers and practicing *wudhu*. Specific to the *ukhuwwah Islamiyyah*, the RA institutions which affiliate to the Nahdlatul Ulama organization are rather different in expressing their religiosity. For example, in every commemoration of the Islamic New Year which falls on Muharram first, the RA Al-Hikmah holds *Tumpengan* tradition. Indeed, the process of adapting Islamic values into the local cultures has become the peculiarity of the Islamic characteristics in the Nahdlatul Ulama organization.

The results of early childhood growth and development on the nationalism awareness regarding the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* are apparent from the results of the formal learning process conducted both inside and outside classroom. For example, in the cognitive aspects, the students of the *raudlatul athfal* institutions can understand that Indonesian people are heterogeneous as having been described by the national jargon *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.³ The ability to understand the fact that Indonesian people are heterogeneous is discovered when the students are introduced to numerous

traditional costumes, tribes, cultures, dialects, and professions within the learning process. The awareness of the students toward the unity in diversity grows through such learning activity. At the same time, in the teachings of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*, the principles of differences are also introduced. Since Allah SWT has determined the differences among mankind, the students of the *raudlatul athfal* institutions are taught to interact with one another within the principle of unity in diversity. By doing so, it is expected that the socio-emotional aspects of the students also grow and develop.

Through the introduction of the diversity in Indonesia, it is expected that the children will have the basis of tolerance (*tasamuh*) as early as possible in the interaction with each other. Besides, through the introduction to diversity as well, it is expected that the children will train their attitude of being just and fair to all of their friends and all of other people so that the children will automatically implement the principles of *i'tidal*. At the same time, the introduction of various traditional costumes, cultures, ethnics, religions, and classes, with the support from the introduction of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, at least also lays the foundation for the early childhood that the appreciation toward diversity in Indonesia should be performed based on the spirit of *ruhul wathaniyyah* (the spirit of loving the nation) and the spirit of *ruhut ta'addudiyah* (the spirit of appreciating differences). On the contrary, the introduction of the religious teachings under the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* becomes the spirit of *ruhut tadayun* (the spirit of comprehensible, in-depth, and practiced religiosity). Concerning the statement, the activities which have been related to the donation (*infaq*) and visitating orphanages by the *raudlatul athfal* institutions also become the part of the spirit of *ruhul insaniyyah* (the spirit of humanity).

The process of growing and developing nationalism awareness is indeed difficult to implement in early childhood since the children

³ The meaning of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is Unity in Diversity. This jargon has been a national jargon for the Indonesian people because it can unite all of the Indonesian people who come from various backgrounds.

in this period have not developed an established personality. In the progress, the teachers should adjust learning process into the learning characteristics of early childhood through the habituation model and game method. For example, the introduction of the State Principle, Pancasila, is performed by reading aloud the Pancasila text every morning before beginning learning process. It is this activity which leads the students to a deeper introduction toward the values of Pancasila through habituation. On the other hand, most *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* values can be benefitted for growing and developing nationalism awareness among early childhood since most of these values are very similar to the Indonesian cultures. In other words, many traditions are acceptable for and maintained in the values of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* such as the tradition of *Selametan*⁴. Despite the process, the results of growing and developing the nationalism awareness among early childhood children is not set high since the reasoning level of early childhood students is still simple. Because of this situation, the early childhood relies on the presence of symbols in order to identify and understand something.

CONCLUSION

The internalization of the nationalism values and the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* teachings in early childhood is difficult to perform because the children are not able to perform abstract reasoning yet. However, through the internalization in daily activities on RA, it is expected that the children in their early childhood can understand the principles of nationalism and the teachings of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* since the learning process among early childhood will serve as a foundation for the children in the subsequent learning stage. The reason is that the values which have been internalized among the children will develop until

they reach adulthood since the golden age is the age of formation which has been unforgettable from memories of early childhood until the period of adulthood.

Based on the results and discussion on this study there are two conclusions can be drawn as; *first*, the growth and development of the nationalism awareness among early childhood based on the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* in the RA education institutions have gone through several processes in the form of both the already systematically designed curriculum contents and the less systematically designed curriculum contents. Every process of growth and development in the RA institutions has varied contents and activities. On the one hand, there are some RA institutions which have simply relied on the principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* because these institutions consider the characteristics of early childhood. But, on the other hand, there are also RA institutions which implement the moderate and representative principles of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* in the teaching-learning activities. *The second* is the construction on the nationalism awareness regarding the teachings of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* among the early childhood within the RA institutions is apparent from the commemoration of the Islamic festive days with the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*-nuanced and the activities on the commemoration of the national days. The normative Islamic activities have usually been systematically designed in the curriculum of the RA institutions, while the *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*-nuanced activities and the nationalism-nuanced activities have been designed based on the characteristics of the RA institutions.

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⁴ *Selametan* is a ritual that the Javanese perform whenever they want to show their gratefulness in life. Usually, in *Selametan* people invite their neighbors and relatives to have a banquet together. In the banquet, the *tumpeng* is usually served.

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